

## Completed Pollution Prevention Project Case Study

United States Department of Energy  
Office of Environmental Management  
Fact Sheet

### **Sigma Mesa Clean-Up and Recycling "Waste Not" Project Los Alamos National Laboratory**

#### Original Problem

For several years BUS-4 stored three trailers full of empty metal and fiber containers on Sigma Mesa. When rats were found in the trailers, BUS-4 decided to get rid of all of the old packaging and the trailers as well. The original plan was to check the area for contamination, remediate the area if necessary, and send all of the material to the dump.

#### The Project Solution

Gary Chavez and Johnny Jameson tested all of the items for radioactivity and found only two drum lid rings that had to be treated as low level waste. Instead of arranging for disposal of the other material, they contacted recycling vendors. Ace Metals recycled the metal canisters, JCNNM will recycle the trailer bodies, the fiber packaging was chipped into garden mulch, and the NM State Highway Department took the steel drums for reuse.

#### Value of Improvement

The two months of effort put into the project saved 29 tons of material from being buried in the landfill. A section of Sigma Mesa was cleaned up, and the available rat habitat was reduced in the process.

| Lifecycle Waste Reduction   |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Lifecycle Waste Reduction   | 29.5 tons  |
| Commencement Date           | 1999       |
| Project Useful Life (Years) | Indefinite |



#### DOE Monetary Benefits

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Total Project Cost   | NA |
| Lifecycle Savings    | NA |
| Return on Investment | NA |

#### Benefits At-A-Glance

- Saved space in the county landfill and provided raw material for beneficial uses through recycling.
- Reduced the amount of waste created at LANL by 29.5 tons in 1999.
- Cleaned a section of Sigma Mesa and reduced potential rat habitat.

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**Los Alamos National Laboratory**

|                            |                                    |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Summary Data</b>        |                                    |
| Priority Area:             | Environmental Restoration Projects |
| Project Type:              | Waste Reduction                    |
| Total Project Cost:        | NA                                 |
| Lifecycle Savings:         | NA                                 |
| Implementing Group:        | BUS-4                              |
| Benefiting Group:          | BUS-4                              |
| Useful Life Years:         | Indefinite                         |
| Return on Investment:      | NA                                 |
| Lifecycle Waste Reduction: | 29.5 tons of sanitary waste        |
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